

THE FAST:

As it was delivered in a

SERMON

At *St. Margarets in Westminster*, before the
Honourable *House of Commons* upon *Wednesday* the
12th. of *June* 1661. being the day appointed by His
Majesty and the Parliament, for a solemn Humiliation
upon the late abundance of Rain, and the danger
of Famine, and Pestilence likely to ensue thereby.

By THO: GREENFIELD A. M. Preacher to the
Honourable Society of *Lincoln's-Inne*.

The Second Impression.

Luc. 22. 28, 29. You are they which have continued with me in my
temptations: And I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father
hath appointed unto me.

Ubi malos præmia sequuntur, haud facile quisquam gratuito bonus est.
Salust. ad Cæsarem.

*Suum cuique tribue,
Hoc fas & vives.*

LONDON,
Printed for Henry Brome at the Gun in Ivy-lane, 1661.

ESTABLISHED

STEAMSHIP

THE COMPANY'S STEAMSHIP
WILL BE IN THE PORT OF
NEW YORK ON THE 15th INST.
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To the Honourable the House of COMMONS,
Now in Parliament Assembled,
συμπάτριες.

Gentlemen,



YOU have desired me to print my Sermon, and I desire you to practise it; because, 'tis never so well printed as when 'tis practised: And give me leave to tell you, that if I could order you so well, as you can order me, you should practise it as well as I Print it: Nevertheless, I will performe my part.

Our present age has been an age of wonders, I offer onely three (and those the greatest of them) to your consideration: We have had the best of Princes barbarously murthered; A banisht Prince miraculously restored; And a Loyal people (as yet) but badly requited.

To the first of these you owe your solemn sorrows, for the second your constant thanks, and to the third your just compassions.

For these I was willing to obey your commands, for these I chose my Text, for these I have pleaded, and for these I have done what I never did before, I have Printed what was pleaded for them, that, in case they miss of any other or better remembrance, (as they have done hitherto) yet they may meet with some slender one at least upon a paper.

'Tis confest, you have done your duty well and handsomely to the two first of these wonders, by answering them both,
with

with proportionable and becoming affections ; you have mourned soundly for the first, and rejoyced lustily at the second : These things you ought to have done, yet not to leave the other undone ; undone it is as yet, and so are they for whom it should be done ; and they can say it from as profound an Experience, as any part of Mankind : Eccles. 8. 14. There is a vanity, which is done upon the earth, that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked : Again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous.

It is this Subject, I am now upon, a very poor one, yet a very good one ; and a very good one, because a very Loyal one, and if Novelty makes any thing acceptable (as it does) then this paper may challenge your acceptance, because it treats of a Subject never (as yet) thought upon, of a Subject never handled by any, but verie cursly, very wrongfully.

It is now in your power to do them right, that have suffered wrong, and to feed and relieve these hungry ones, and the honour of the Action will be this, that hereby you will be followers of God : For, the Lord executeth judgment for the oppressed, he giveth food to the hungry, he looseth the prisoners, and raiseth them that are bowed down, Psal. 146. 7, 8. Be ye therefore merciful even as your heavenly Father is merciful : As he is, now, he is mercifull both to the just, and to the unjust ; be merciful to both you may, but to be merciful to the unjust onlie, and not to the just also, this is crueltie ; if honest men may not have the preference in your mercie, you cannot do less, then let them go sharers with others, that have far less (if at all) deserv'd it.

'Tis verie possible, (and, I fear verie probable,) that
many

many years may not bring forth such a Temper, and Complexion of Parliament, as this is, in which you sit: for 'tis a thing as full of Hazard, as the project of the great Elixar, which misses a hundred times, before it hits once; your children to many generations may sadly desire to see one of the dayes of such a Convention, and yet not see it: Therefore, behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation: To day therefore (after so long a time) whilst it is said, to day, harden not your hearts; if you do, and (with Esau) sell your own, and others birth-rights, afterwards, when you would inherit the blessing, you will be rejected, though you seek it carefully with tears.

You love, and are for Loyalty, I know you are; and if you be, then cherish what you love: let that Tree have the most, and best care and water, the best soil and fence, which gives you the Fruit you most love.

It was a cruelty no where to be found, but in a Nero, Ardet Roma, dum cythara canit: And shall we (as Israel, Amos 6. 4, 5, 6.) lye upon beds of Ivory, and stretch our selves upon our Couches, and eat the lambs out of the Flock, and the Calves out of the midst of the stall: shall we chant to the sound of the Viol, and invent to our selves instruments of Musick: shall we drink wine in bowles, and anoint our selves with the chief oynments, and not be grieved for the Affliction of Joseph? If so, what will follow? even the judgement we now fear, v. 7. the banquet of them that stretched themselves, shall be removed.

I am apt to think, that David blusht, when having obtained rest from all his Enemies round about, and sitting quietly in his house, he told the Prophet, 2 Sam. 7. 1, 2. See now, I dwell in a house of Cedar, but the Ark of

of God dwelleth within curtains; and they were very
course ones too, for they were made of Goats hair: Such a
blush would become you, and you will never look so hand-
somy, as when this brings up the Reds into your Cheeks, to
consider, that the Lord hath given you Rest, and hath set you
down peaceably in your houses; and yet all this while, these
Men (like the Arke) remain clad in course and torn gar-
ments, and though the foxes have holes; and the birds of the
Aire have nests, yet these men have not a place where to lay
down their heads.

— pudet hæc opprobria nobis
Et dici potuisse, & non potuisse refelli.

*Methinks, 'tis enough to make you shake, and sweat
again, to consider how open you lye to the just complaints of
these poor Souls, if they should bespeak you in the lan-
guage of the Apostle, (then in a case much like theirs now.)*
1 Cor. 4. 8. &c. Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye
have reigned as Kings without us, and we would to
God, ye did reign, that we also might reign with you:
For we think, that God hath set forth us last, as it were
men appoinred to death; for we are made a spectacle
unto the world, and to angels, and to men: we are fools,
but ye are wise; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye
are honourable, but we are despised: even unto this
present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked,
and are buffered, and have no certain dwelling place:
And labour, working with our own hands; being reviled,
we blesse; being persecuted, we suffer it; being
defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the
world, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this
day.

And

And if this be their Case, (as indeed it is,) then, how just and ingenuous will it be for you, to consider it : And remember, that if it be just and good with God, that our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, should work for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory : then certainly he will not take it well at your hands, if their heavy Afflictions, which have been for many years, should work nothing for them, but a far more exceeding, and insupportable weight of want and misery.

I have forgot the Name, but I remember the Vertue of that great Commander, who when his Army was much distressed in point of Aquation, and a bottle of water was presented to himself by one of his Souldiers, he flung it on the ground, and this after it, God forbid, that I should drink, when my poor Souldiers are perishing with thirst : And the kindness of Alexander (if Curtius may be credited) was as great as himself, who in a cold frosty night, sitting by a great fire in an open field, and espying a poor Souldier upon an out guard ready to drop down dead with the Cold, ran to him, took him up in his Armes, brought him to the Fire, set him in his own Chair, rubb'd and chafed him with his own hands, and with much adoe brought him to life : These wise men knew this to be the way, to oblige an Army to them.

I leave this with you, to apply, and to divine, what I mean by it ; and withall, you may do well to remember, how many of your own Families received both their Honours and Estates from the Norman service : That just Prince thought it his duty to requite his Souldiers, and if you would know the English of Miles, Eques, Comes, &c. which you now wear about your Escutcheons, they are flowers which grew up out of that Field, far unlike those weeds, which now spring from a service as ingenuous and just as
B that,

that, for which the Herauldry is so much altered, that they yet wear no other badge, then Pedes, Pauper, Famelicus, for being Loyal to their Prince.

Yet thinks, 'tis not so handsome, to see a Nation (that was lately Gules all over) now to stand checker'd Argent and Sable, and to behold our late great Mercy of our Sovereigns Restauration like that Pillar, Exod. 14. 20. Cloud and darknesse to some, but light to others; nor are things well in Tune, when (as at the building of the second Temple, Ezra 3. 13.) we cannot discern the noise of the shout of joy, from the noise of the weeping of the people, when one part (the more antient and righteous) may weep it out with the Poet,

— Hæc ego, — tulit alter honores,
Sic vos non vobis —

And another (more novel and criminal,) shall triumph it with an O quàm bonum jucundum, &c. Oh how pleasant and profitable a thing it is to fight against our Sovereign! whereas the truth is, Justice can never speak better sense, than when it doth upbraid such demeriting persons with that Sarcasme of the Apostle, Rom. 6. 21. Τινα καρπὸν? what fruit would you have from those things, whereof you are now ashamed? For the end of such things is Death.

And let no man recriminate this address, from the intemperance and debauchery of the Persons, for whom 'tis made. I remember the check and aspersions, given of old by the Pharisees to Christ, who censured him for eating with Publicans and Sinners, when he had no where else to go: 'Tis a very hard piece of Justice, to censure and condemn men for eating and drinking in publick houses, when they have

have no Houses left them of their own, to eat and to drink in.

If there be Oathes and Atheisme, &c. more visible among them, then others, it will lye very much at the doors of their Oppressors. David had lost almost all his Religion; by the contemplation of the good success of evil men, Psal. 73. Do them right, and try what they will be, surely those consciences, which have worn about them such deep impressions and resentments of Loyalty and Honour all this while, (and that at so great a disadvantage) must in charity be hoped to have other good principles of Morality also, which though perhaps they lye now in a swoon, yet they may be awakned into practise by your just Encouragements, and 'tis ten to one, but you will thereby restore them, not onely to their Rights and Fortunes, but to their wits and vertues. A breath from your lips is able to quicken this field of dry bones into an Army of Vertuoso's.

I will not prescribe to your Wisedoms what to do for them, nor adventure at reasons of State, why something must be done: There are many and great ones, but you can give them to your selves; they are those of Religion, which I offer you, and if Justice and Charity be your duties, and the Compals of your Actions, then this is.

If you will do no more for them, yet remember them, give them (at least) a place in your Annals and Records; God has (among many other Books) a book of Remembrance, Mal. 3. 16. and in this Book he records the sufferings of good men, Psal. 56. 8. Their tears are put up in his bottle, and written in his Book.

And it seems by that passage concerning Mordecai, Hest. 6. 1, 2, 3. that it was the manner of the Eastern Princes to record the services and sufferings of good Subjects to posterity, as soon as they were done or suffered: And there

were Scribes among the Jews (if my conjecture faile not)
whose peculiar office it was to do this ; and truly the exam-
ple of Ahasuerus there , deserves to be commended to the
practise of Princes , ver. 1. he was reading one night in his
book of Records , and found the good service of Mordecai,
in discovering a Treason against his Person, v. 2. and then
puts a question (and it is *Questio rege digna*) what Ho-
nour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this ?
v. 3. 'twas answered, there was nothing done for him, but
it was not long ere something was.

If these and the following lines, may have the happineß
to move you to put the same question for our Mordecai's,
What hath been done for them ? and upon finding, that
as yet nothing is done for them , to put it further to the que-
stion , What shall be done for them ? God shall have his
will. I my end, they the comfort, and you the honour of so just
and brave an Action.

Lincoln's Inne, Ju-
ly 6. 1661.

Which shall ever be the Prayer of your
most devoted Servant in the things of
God and his Righteousness,

THOMAS GRENFIELD.

ISA Y 58.



ISAY 58. 5, 6, 7.

5. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a Bull-rush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?

6. Is not this **THE FAST** that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

7. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house, when thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy self from thine own flesh?



YOU are met this day upon a very great and important work, and you have summon'd hither a poor and weak man to assist you in it; one that had more need to be fasted for, then able to direct others, one who is (as at no time able, so) at this time not willing to dress out the business before us with Elocution; and the rather, because as it is the custom of Mourners, to dis-
poile

poile their garments of all Ribbons and other dressees when they Mourn; so I think, if plain garments be fashionable there, a plain Sermon will be seasonable here.

This people (here concerned in the Text) were a Nation much addicted to outward and formall duties, and among others to this of fasting, the second verse before the Text will describe you this; And how punctual and ceremonious they were in it, the 5. verse (which is part of the Text) does decipher: It seems, this formality ran down the whole current of that generation, for when I look almost home to the end of it (in the dayes of Christ) I find the same humour stirring amongst the *Pharisees*, of whom Christ sayes, *Mat. 6. 16.* that when they fasted, they were *οὐδὲ παρόμοιοι*: that is, (as one interprets it) they would look like *Scythians*; and they did (as is observed in the Text before mentioned) *ἀποκρύπτειν*, that is, they either cover'd their faces with black-hoods, or else (as one acutely observes it out of Antiquity) they used a paint or fucus to make them seem sad and mortified; and the great errour of them was, to think that when this was done, the fast was over.

Now the businesse of this Text (with the coherents) is to reprove, and with reprovng to reject this formality of fasting, and to commend and teach the true reality of it.

And (indeed) these are the parts of the Text.

First, a formal fast reprov'd and rejected, *v. 5.*

Secondly, a real fast prescribed and accepted, *v. 6.*

And both these are done in the way of expostulation, which argues a more then ordinary vehemency in what is spoken.

First, an expostulation in the Affirmative, *vers. 5.*

Is it such a fast? which is an ardent Negation, signifying that by no means it is not at all such a fast.

Secondly, an expostulation in the Negative, v. 6, 7. *Is not this the fast, &c.* intimating a most vigorous Affirmative: Certainly, assuredly, *this is the fast that I have chosen.*

So that in the first, all formalities of a fast (when they go alone) are rejected; these Jewish formalities in the Text, *to afflict the soul, to bow down the head like a Bull rush, &c.* and on the same score our Christian formalities of fasting all the day, meeting in the House of publick Worship, making long Prayers, and hearing five or six Sermons one on the neck of another, these (I say) when they go alone are rejected; and our own observation can testify, they have been so.

And in the second, the real, proper, genuine duties of an acceptable fast are prescribed and directed, and those are two.

First, the duty of Justice unto men oppressed, v. 6.

Secondly, the duty of Charity to men ejected, v. 7.

And this is the fast that God hath chosen:

That, which (without any violence) is deducible from the Text, may be reduced to these three particulars, within which I shall confine all I have to say.

First, that fasting is a duty.

Secondly, that God in some cases does reject it.

Thirdly, what must be done to make it acceptable.

I. I begin with the first. That fasting is a duty, this is plain in the Text; where, though we have *rejectionem modi*, yet not *rei*, of that manner of fasting, not of fasting it self, ver. 4. we have not a peremptory, *non jejunabitis*, but a *non sic jejunabitis*; and in the 5. verse it is only *tale jejunium*, not a fast at large, but such a fast

fast that has nothing but formalities, and mediate duties in it, *vocem & preterea nihil*, a cymbal fast, that makes a noise and hath no charity; this God rejecteth.

And the reason is, because to the morall goodnesse of an action, there is required, not only the matter and bulk of the fact, the manufacture and outward body of it, but many circumstances to make it good, *St. Aug.* observes it in the point of delivering up Christ unto death, how much the end and intention in an act does diversifie the act it self; *Pater tradidit filium* (saith he) *Judas Dominum Christum seipsum*, one and the same act (*viç.*) the giving up of Christ, was mercy in God, love in Christ, but treason in the Apostate. So here, as the Apostle sayes of the law, *1 Tim. 1. 8.* that it is good if a man use it lawfully, so is the duty of fasting, good or evil, as it stands qualified by the end and intention of the persons.

In the 4. verse before the Text the fast was evil, because the intention was so, *The fast for strife and debate, &c.* and verse 6. and 7. of the Text, the fast is allowed to be good and acceptable, if it stand associated with the duties of justice and mercy.

Clear it is then, that fasting is our duty, and the more clear, because we have occasions for it.

The first; one is judgement impending or incumbing, at the door, or in the house, *Isa. 22. 12* *Israel was in danger of an invasion, and in that day* (saith the Prophet) *did the Lord call to weeping, and to mourning.*

Though we read not of any Prophet, that by word of mouth required the people to it, yet there was *vax virga*, *Mic. 6. 9.* the rod had a tongue, there was a Summons in the present providence, there was a *Hannibal ad portas*, the Persian was at the gates.

And

And least the call of Providence should be thought not loud enough, we have an expresse summons from the VVord to this duty, *Joel 2. 15, 16, 17.* the 15. ver. gives us the Precept, *Sanctifie a fast, &c.* the 16. verse summons the Persons, and those are all concerned, *the people, congregation, young and old, &c.* and the 17. verse gives us the duty, *prayer, spare thy people O Lord, &c.* and this was the practise of *Israel* who like a flock of sheep, though in times of safety and peace, they wandred abroad securely in their severall pastures, yet when the Dog or VVoolf drew near, they ran together to this Duty.

Secondly, another occasion to this duty, is some important enterprize or undertaking, that has danger and difficulty in it: Thus did *Hester*, who going to pacifie the anger of *Ahasuerus* towards the Jews, and to gain his favour (a thing dangerous, and difficult to be had from so great a Prince) bids the people *fast for this, and not eat nor drink three dayes, night or day, and I (said she) and my maidens will fast likewise, and so will I go to the King, (though it be not according to law,) and if I perish I perish;* And as the enterprize was great, so the fast made it prosperous: Thus the Apostles, being to ordain, and send abroad Ministers to the Gentiles, (an affair of greater danger and difficulty, (and importance too) than the former) *they prayed unto the Lord and fasted,* and having so done, *they laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul, and sent them away,* *Acts 13. 2, 3.* which practise of theirs (methinks) gives no mean warrant to the observation of our Ember weeks, as preparatory to the laying on of hands.

Hest. 4. 16.

The things must be great and good; and when so, they must be fasted for; *not for strife and debate, nor*

to smite with the fist of wickedness, not for a prosperous Rebellion, or Regicide (for that's the English of the former,) such fasts are to be fasted for, and fasted from, and the late signal confutations given out by Providence upon such fasts, are evidence enough, we ought not to fast for such things. And indeed as all other service, so this of fasting, (as the Apostle styles it) *Rom. 12. 1.* it is λογική λατρεία *a reasonable service.*

For first, God expects from us, a demeanour suitable to our condition, and as he was justly condemn'd, that came without a wedding garment to the feast, so may he no lesse, that wears it at a fast.

Hosea 11. 10. we are required to walk after the Lord in his dispensations, and when he shall roar like a Lion, then ought we (like good children) to tremble; 'Tis a piece of most intollerable insolence, for men to laugh and sport themselves when God frownes: this in Israel was so offensive, that, *Isay 22. 14.* because, when God call'd to weeping and to mourning, there was found amongst them joy and gladness, eating flesh, and drinking wine, &c. therefore that Iniquity should not be purged from them, till they died: It seemsto be a most unpardonable, and killing iniquity; it addes wings to the leaden feet of vengeance, and sets on work her iron hands; it makes her come faster, and strike deeper; it was this that brought in the deluge upon the antient world, *Matth. 24. 38.* because they were eating and drinking, &c. therefore the flood came, and took them all away.

Secondly, a discreet observation of judgements (either near us or upon us,) will naturally beget such a temper of mind in us, as will produce this duty; For in the way of a natural operation, when we are in pain, in fear, in danger, or under any sort of discontent, we weep,
We

we cry, we pray, we fast; *when he slew them* (saith *David*) *then they sought him. Damocles* (though set down at a plentiful Table) yet could not eat bit, because of the Sword that was so subtilly hung over him; where ever there is a prospect or fear of a judgement, it will produce this; 'tis true, if a man were a beast (and they are little lesse that do so) void of fore-sight and consideration, he might be allowed to graze on though it thunders, and like the swine eat his meat as lustily an hour before his throat is cut, as at any time before; And let not our Hilariors take it ill, that I cannot range them amongst any other sort of Cattel: For to be senselesse and sensual at the approach of judgements, is for want of judgement; the very *Heathens* themselves (when in this Condition) were not strangers to this duty: *Niniveh* fasted from the King to the Beggar, and from the Beggar to the Beast for the threat that *Ionas* gave them: And this also makes it a reasonable service.

Thirdly, the reason of this duty further appears, in that the very outward act of fasting doth qualifie and dispose a man unto those other duties, that are more material; for if Prayer, Confession, Contrition, are duties that do much conduce to deliverance and mercy; and if it be Gods usual method never to take us up till he finds us on our knees; when we are so fit for these duties, as when we fast? *For the corruptible body* (as you have it *VVild. 9.15.*) *presseth down the Soul, and the earthly Tabernacle, weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things.* Now we have many things to muse upon in this duty, and fasting unclogs the soul, and takes off that mire and dirt that hangs about the wings of the mind, whereby it mounts much higher in all spiritual acts; And therefore the caveat of Christ is

good, *Luke 21. 34.* Take heed to your selves, least at any time your hearts be over charged with surfeiting, and drunkenesse (βαρυθάσι the word is) ne ingrauentur, lest your hearts be made heavy; Intemperance takes off the wheels of the Soul, and makes it drive heavily.

A duty then it is, in that there are just occasions of it, and strong reasons for it: but let it be never so much a duty, and never so often done, yet in some cases God rejects it. And this translates me over into the second particular, which is to make inquiry in what cases, and for what causes God does reject the fastings and humiliations of men.

Rejected they are it seems sometimes: For in the ver. before the Text we find an expresse prohibition: *You shall not fast as you do this day*; and though it may seem strange to find a Yea and a Nay in God, to command and inhibit the same thing, to make it sometimes a duty, and yet charge it as a sin; there must be some reasons for this, and it nearly concerns us to inquire what they are.

First, then God rejects our fastings, when he finds nothing else but form and outward solemnity in them: It is the saying of Christ, *Luke 16. 15.* That which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God; what is highly esteemed among men? you may find it *1 Sam. 16. 7.* Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God does not, he cannot indure an out-side when it goes alone. Here in the Text God abhors that humiliation for this very reason, in that they made it up with a bundle of Ceremonies, gestures, cryings aloud, forbearing meat, looking sad, and wearing sackcloth, and so did only *Histriones* agere personate a fast, and were no more concerned in't, than the Actors are concerned in the matter of the plot.

Secondly,

Secondly, God rejecteth our humiliations, when they are let on work meerly for the removal of judgments, or the attainer of mercies; to fast meerly for the one, as *St. James* tells us, that there is a faith of Devils, so we may call this the fast of Devils: that eternall humiliation and contrition that is now practis'd in Hell, and those Howlings, Weepings, and gnashing of Teeth, that are there among the damned, are the result and effect of their never-dying torments. And to fast meerly for the attainer of the other, is no better then the fast of dogs and swine, who howl and make a noise because their trough is empty, and God gives it no better name, when he tels them, *Hof. 7. 14. That they did not cry unto him with their heart, but howled upon their beds, and assembled themselves for Corn and Wine*: It is therefore the proper errand of an humbled people to confesse their sin, and to beg pardon and grace, and let providence take care for the rest; especially, when it stands encircled in a promise, that if we seek these first, *ex abundanti*, all other things shall be added to us. It concerns us of this Nation to consider this, and rightly to state the reason of our humiliations: for we have had fastings for judgements (and have one this day) but not one as yet for sin.

Thirdly, 'tis not every fasting for sin that God accepts, but in some cases does reject it, though it be for sin; And that is when we humble our selves for such sins, which lie in our own power to reform and remove: There is the same non-sense and absurdity in this case, as when a lusty fellow lies in a ditch and cries God help; we have a pregnant instance of Gods rejection of our fastings in this case, in that of *Joshua*, *Josh. 7. 6. A sin was committed by Achan and concealed,*

ed, and the people for that sin were defeated more then once by the men of *Ai*; *Joshua* a publick Magistrate (upon this) *fell to his humiliation, rent his cloath, fell to the earth upon his face, put dust upon his head and prayed*; But all this God rejects, and in the 10. verses gives a smart check unto it, *get thee up, wherefore lyeest thou thus upon thy face?* and in the 13. verse calls him out to practise, *Up, Sanctifie the people*, and make a diligent enquiry after the accursed thing; God hath given the Magistrate a Sword, and he must not bear that Sword in vain. When sin and prophaneness abound in a Nation through the Magistrates neglect or cowardise, 'tis not his nor our fasting will remove it; because he hath a more effectuell means in his hands to do it: And in Gods account such a fast is as ridiculous as if an husbandman coming into his Vineyard, and finding it over-run with Bryars and Thorns, should fling aside his pruning hook and fall to his prayers, that God would weed them out.

Fourthly, God rejects the fastings of men when they except and reserve the practise of some beloved bosom sins unto themselves; this is noted with a more then ordinary indignation, *Ier. 7. 9, 10, 11. Will you steal, murthcr, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, &c. and come and stand before me in this house which is called by my name, and say we are delivered to do all these abominations: is this house which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? behold I (even I) have seen it, saith the Lord. We may English it thus, will you come and fast before the Lord for fear of Famine and Pestilence, and put in exceptions to Rebellion, Regicide, Oppression, and the detainer of other mens bread? Is this the Fast that I have chosen? one such *Dalilah* is enough*

enough to destroy the strongest *Sampson*; one such *Agag*, is sufficient to undo the tallest *Saul*; one excepted sin, will make void the best of fasts, and as long as *Achan*, with his wedge and garment lay undiscovered, unbrought out, let not *Israel* expect to prosper; such a day as this ought to be a day of slaughter, and if God at another time will deal impartially with us for our sins, then it concerns us now to deal impartially with them, and not to roul any one (no not the most beloved one,) as a sweet morsel under the tongue, for fear it prove as the book which was given to Saint *John* to eat, *though sweet in the mouth, yet bitter in the belly*; I have known the whole work of a Chyrurgion defeated, by such a partiality as this, and, because he searched not at the bottom, though he skinn'd it over to the eye, the wound did fester and suppurate, and he was forced to begin again; if you will make suant work in your fasting, bring out the bottom of your sins, do not keep back a part, and this may heal the land.

Fiftly, The fastings of men are rejected, when they will not be convinced of some sins, that they are so indeed, as in the case of shedding innocent blood, when we have shed it, and call it justice; fast while you will in this perswasion, God will not accept it, 'tis plain enough *Isa. 1.* from the 10. to the 15. ver. in the 10. ver. God gives his own people very sad names, *Rulers of Sodom, and people of Gomorrha*; and in the following verses, he gives all their services a very sad reception: *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? I delight not, &c. who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? incense is an obomination to me, the new Moons and Sabbaoths, and the calling of assemblies I cannot*

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not away with, it is iniquity, even the solemn meetings my soul hateth them, they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them; and when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear.

A strange dislike, and were there not a reason given for it, never enough to be wondred at, that God should abandon the very service that he does command, and what's that reason? God that does nothing without the highest reason gives you his in the bottom of the 15. ver. (and indeed it is like some cholerick distemper in the bottom of the stomach, which makes us vomit up all we eat,) *Your hands are full of blood*: when blood is upon a Nation unacknowledged, unrepented, it mars all the services of it.

Lastly, God does reject the fastings of men when they are undertaken to promote bad ends, and wicked purposes: such a fast was that of *Jezebel*, 1 Kings 21.9. she proclaimed a fast, that under the colour of a trespass against that proclamation, she might obtain the life and vineyard of *Naboth*: And the fastings of *Israel* are here rejected in this Chapter, because they were undertaken to promote strife and debate, and prosperously to smite with the fist of wickedness, and in the 3. ver. more especially the reason is given, because in the day of your fast you find pleasure, that is, (as the vulgar renders it,) *invenitur voluntas vestra*, you bring with you your own wills, desires, designs, and hope to carry them on by fasting, and as it follows, you exact all your labours, *Omnes debitores vestros repetitis*, you beg of God a prosperous vengeance upon those you think have wrong'd you; such low and base ends do no more justify a fast, the when a Robber prays for an advantageous encounter,

ter, or a Pirate for a fair winde at Sea; If we thus bring in the tables of Money-changers into the house of God, and come here to truck with him, for the grant of our own desires, he will over-throw those tables, and scourge out such Merchants: If we fast to satisfie our own ambition, cruelty or covetousness, we pervert the end of this duty, by bringing that hither to be cherish'd, which should be brought hither to be slain; and truly (if I might have leave to give my judgement,) I cannot understand why so great a defeat has been given out from God, upon those many humiliations (seemingly to me very solemn and serious,) which were acted by this Nation, and especially in this place, for these last 20. years, insomuch as we might expostulate as this people did in the 3. ver. *wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not; wherefore have we afflicted our Souls and thou takest no knowledge?* I say, I can give no reason for such disappointment, but this, we proposed base and degenerate ends in our fastings, we fasted to devour the comforts of other men with a better stomach, and to make our selves rich by their ruine.

You see then that the fastings of men may be reject-ed, and you have seen in what cases, 'twill now be reasonable to put such a question, as he did in the Gospel, *Good Master, what good thing must I do that I may obtain eternal life?* so here, what good thing must we do, to make our fasting acceptable unto God? The answer to this you will have in the third particular upon which I am now entring.

The proper ingredients therefore of a Fast to make it acceptable are not for to seek, for you may quickly find them in the 16, 17. ver. of *Isa. 1. Cease to do evil, learn to do well.*

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First,

First, *Cease to do evil*, then do we fast indeed when we fast from sin: 'tis not our withholding meat from the body, but our withdrawing all sorts of supplements from our lusts, that makes a fast; The lusts of our hearts have wide mouths and craving stomachs; Ambition, would never cease aspiring, till it perch on the chime of the world; Covetousnesse would ingrosse all the rich of the *Indies*; Revenge, would glut it self with the blood of others; and 'tis the work of those that fast, to tye up these, and keep them short, to lay siege to them, and intercept their provisions, the best way to kill them is to starve them out; That expression of the Apostle is very apt, *Gal. 5. 24. They that are Christs have crucified the flesh*: now, crucifixion is to fasten and bind down a living creature to that which is crosse and contrary to it. Our lusts are those living creatures, and to crucifie them is to feed them with contraries; Pride, would have a Crown of gold, give it a Crown of thorns; Luxury, would have the generous wine, give it vinegar mingled with gall: 'tis no fasting except this be done, and therefore Saint Bernard, doth elegantly upbraid a fast that is kept without this, *Carnem non comedis, sed comedis fratrem, à vino abstines, sed ab injuriis tibi non temperas*; 'tis a sad fast to forbear bread and meat, and the while to devour the flesh and blood of thy brother.

Secondly, *Learn to do well*, this indeed is the very glory and accomplishment of a fast. But what that doing well is, that's the question: To Worship God is to do well, to hear, to pray is to do well, but yet this is not the doing well is here required; yea, this doing well is rejected and spurned at of God, if there be no other sorts of well-doing going with it; and what that is

is you have in the 17. ver. of *Isay* 1. *Relieve (or righten) the oppressed, judge the fatherlesse, plead for the widow.*

'Tis clear then that the duties of Justice and Mercy are not only the Ornaments, but the essentials of a fast; they are made so in the Text, *where there are any bands of wickednesse they must be loosed, any heavie burdens they must be undone, any oppressed ones they must go free, any yoke it must be broken, any that are hungrie thy bread must be dealt unto them, any that are poor and cast out they must be brought to thy house, any naked thou must cover him; and good reason, for in the bottom of the verse, he is thine own flesh, at what wideness soever we are differenced by other things in the World, yet the poorest man alive is thy own flesh, and in all thy acts of mercy to him, thou art mercifull to a part of thy self.* This is the fast, and how importunately the Spirit of God harps upon this string, and points us (as it were with the finger) to this, even to this sort of duty, you may further see in *Zach.* 7. 9, 10. where after a reproof given to their formal fastings, verse 5. a rule is subjoyned for them what to do: *Execute true Judgement, and shew Mercie and Compassion everie man to his Brother, and oppresse not the Widdow, nor the Fatherless, the Stranger, nor the Poor, and let none of you imagine evil against his Brother in your heart.* It is a strange preference, and much to be wonder'd at, which God gives to the duties we owe to man, before those we owe to himself: methinks it were enough to say that the second Commandement is like unto the first, *Math.* 22. 39. but to say, *first go and be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy gift; to say, I will have Mercie rather then Sacrifice, as Gods goodnesse in this to be wondred at,*

so mans duty from this is to be concluded on, that our works of Mercy, Justice, Charity, must be done by us with as great a zeal, and with a greater earliness, then those very services which we do to God.

There is now left nought remaining to trouble your patience with, but my application and your practise. You are here met in the house of God, and what to do? to fast; and for what? the suspitions and fears of a famine like to come upon us, from our late abundance of Rain, threatening to spoil the Fruits of the Earth. 'Tis very well, that any thing will drive us home to God; but yet, it is observable how early we are in this duty; we fast for a judgement that is not yet upon us, further then the fear and suspicion of it: It would be much more ingenuous, to be early and quick in fasting for the sins of the Nation, as we are for the dangers of it, those (I am sure) are ripe enough and ready for the sickle; we are much beyond the suspitions of sin, we are under the Commissions of it; and yet, as yet we have had no fast for these, it would very much beautifie the beginnings of this blessed revolution, and fortunate change of things we live under, to begin with such a fast as this: but it seems we love our bellies very well, and as some followed Christ for the loaves, so we fast for fear we shall want the loaves, we fast for fear that we shall fast.

But since it is so, that the work of this day stands stated to my hands, upon this bottom, it will be convenient before I can direct you how to be rid of this judgement, to give you my judgement whence it comes: For assuredly 'tis no *brutum fulmen*, no arrow shot at rovers, no accident slip'd out of the womb of chance without any signification in it: no, no; as God
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is the highest reason, so all that he does comes from it, and is guided by it, his very judgements themselves are reasonable judgements : and therefore though many things come forth from God, the causes of which shall not be known untill the day of *the revelation of his righteousness* ; yet in the generall he bids us believe, and would have us know, *that he hath not done without cause all that he hath done*, Ezek. 14. 23.

Well then, a reason for this judgement there is, and what is it ? to tell you that it is wickednesse in the general, is to fling an whole loaf at your head ; and not to cut it for you ; but yet the Psalmist tells us so, *Psal. 107. 34. He turneth a fruitfull land into barrenness for the wickednesse of them that dwell therein*, and as God told *Adam, Gen. 3. 17.* that the ground was cursed for his sake (that is, for his sin) so if our ground now be like to undergoe a Curse, it is for our sins ; And for what sins ? Certainly, for some sins above others ; for as the Clouds send down no other waters then what the Earth sends up, so there is something come up from us before God, that has drawn down our present judgements on us.

There have been divers interpretations past on this late abundance of Rain ; The Star-gazer charges it upon some notable configuration in the Heavens, but yet (as our late Astrologers confessed they could not read our late revolution, *and blessed return* of the King in any conjunction of the Planets, but gave it clearly up to be a miracle) so if you now examine their Almanacks, you shall not find a word fore-telling all this foul weather ; which makes me think it is more then a naturall, it is a judicial effect.

And therefore others (that are no good friend to our

present wellfare) will adventure to make a malicious glosse upon the present judgement, and whisper it at least in corners, that it is for the Kings coming in, for our importunate desires of his return, and for our great rejoycings at his presente : And they observe (with some pleasure to themselves) the great Rain that fell at the first treatment of His Majestie in the City, the great Rain and Thunder upon the day of his Coronation, and the great Rains that have continued ever since, and they make bold with Scripture to prove this to be the cause of the judgement from *1 Sam. 12. 17.* where *Samuel* tells the people thus : *I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain : that ye may perceive and see that your wickednesse is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a King.* But I question not, but this interpretation is too private and wide enough : Therefore to come nearer home, what may the sins be ? Truly the Nation stands now guilty of such sins, that I could find in my heart rather to pray for a famine then to pray against it ; For as fasting in the way of a physicall operation is good to cure many diseases, so there be many sins (especially those of pride and luxury) which famine would be an excellent means to remove, by removing the food and fomentations of them.

What our sins are, may be read in the very face of the judgement ; that as the *Hetrurians* of old erected a Colledge of wise men to be their *fulminum interpretes*, their Expositors of Thunder-bolts ; and as Physicians now by the signature they observe in a plant will guess shrewdly, what it is wholesome for, and hurtfull to : So there is a signature in the present judgement, and by the Features and Complexion that is in it we may
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Calculate its Nativity, and judge whence it comes.

First, then, what think you of the sin of Sabbaoth-breaking? a sin now more frequent, impudent, and unpunished, then in those late black days, in which greater sins were counted none at all; This blessed day is now as much mangled and broken, as once the Lord and Master of it was; and as the Poet deriding the immoderate drestes of a Girl, told her that she was *minima pars sui*, so is this day, so divided, and loaden with affairs and sins, that it is now become the least part of it self, and you may seek for a Sabbaoth, in a Sabbaoth, and yet not find it. And whereas it is an holy day, now other days are innocent to this, those we spend upon our callings, this upon our sins, and now do but see how this judgment is fitted to this sin, *Lev. 26. 34.* where *Moses* tells the people *that the land should enjoy her Sabbaoth*, and lie desolate: because the men of the land will not keep their Sabbaoths, therefore the land it self shall keep hers; and such a Sabbaoth is now like to be kept for this year by a great part of our land.

Secondly, next what think you of the sin of swearing? a sin whereby the devil cheats a man more then by any, by being damned for it, and getting nothing by it: never did bullets fly thicker in the hottest battel, then oaths now in this wicked City; you cannot pass the streets, but your ears will be box'd by an oath at every step, and 'tis a wonder to me, if these arrows which are shot bolt up-right and levell'd point-blank at God, do not recoyle upon the heads of those that shot them; but how this sin does more particularly contribute to the judgement we now fear, you may see *Jer. 23. 10.* where we are told that because of Oaths (Curses) *the land mourneth*. There is a sort of ground which husbandmen

men do call weeping ground, and 'tis barren and good for little; we have such now, whole Countries lie bathed in the teares of Heaven, and that because of Oaths; for if by them we pull God out of Heaven, and tear him in pieces between our teeth, if we use his name so vainly as if there were no such being, 'tis no marvell if the Clouds tumble down upon us, when we leave none in Heaven to govern and hold them up: He that thinks or lives as if there were no God, shall be cared for here, as if there were none.

Thirdly, what think you of the sin of *Adulterie*? whether this may not beget a Famine, *Jer. 5. 7, 8. When I fed them to the full, they then committed Adulterie, and assembled themselves by Troops in the Harlots houses, they were as fed horses in the morning, everie one weighed after his neighbours wife, shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord?* and what is the visitation for these things? you shall find it verse 17. *a famine*, this that we fear, though coming another way, yet from the same sin; *They shall eat of thine harvest, and thy bread which thy Sons and Daughters should eat, they shall eat of thy flocks and thy herds, they shall eat of thy Vines and thy Fig-trees, &c.* and it is a punishment both just and proper, if thou borrow strength from the creature to squander it away upon unlawful beds, 'tis fit that God should take the creature from thee: If a stallion grow unruly, tye him up to an empty rack.

Fourthly, what think you of *Intemperance*? a sin that brings forth this suspected judgement, both physically and judicially too. Physically, 'tis no marvel if there be a scarcity when we fill our Tables to such a height to feed a few, as will suffice for many, committing a miracle contrary to that of Christ, who fed 5000. with
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five loaves, and we feed but five with some scores of dishes.

And judicially this judgement lies much at the door of this sin, to wit the *Luxury* of man, for if you mark it, this plague of Rain hurts not the grasse so much as the grain, the horse and oxe are provided for well enough, nay the Country-man tells me that Cattle are like to be gainers by't, it is because they are temperate; but 'tis the Luxurious and debauched part of mankind that are like to be the losers, in that Wheat and Barley are the greatest sufferers in this deluge, and he that told me that the Barrels of Beer and the Buts of Wine were seen to swim about the Cellars here in Town, made me presently think it was to punish our Drunkenesse; For as a Father spills the Wine and breaks the Cup when he sees his child but in danger to be fluster'd, so God does language it in this judgement, that it was our Luxury that brought it, by destroying the Toolles and Utensils of that sin.

Fifthly and lastly, I will mention one sin more which (I fear) hath contributed somewhat more than the rest to this judgement, and that is our publick defayler in the duties mentioned in the Text, *The want of Justice and Charity*; and indeed (to tell you the truth) I chose this Text, and have spoken all this while upon it, onely to introduce what follows; and give me leave to be very plain and home with you.

There is a party yet alive in *England* (if they be alive, and indeed 'tis as much as they are) that have been, and do still own the name of *true Englishmen* (for the rest live only by an *Amnesty*, and are *Englishmen* but of one year old) but these I am speaking for are *true old Englishmen*, and great sufferers for being so: in that,
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they live and are let pass, not onely without reward, but restitution, not only without respect of others, but the recovery of their own. Astrologers have amused the World of late with reports of strange and wonderfull Conjunctions; never were there such strange and monstrous couples as are now seen marching together in England, Loyalty and rags, Loyalty and lice, Loyalty and hunger, Loyalty and a prison: Poor Loyalty! the flower and credit of every good Christian, how hardly art thou used, to be unequally yoked with such as these! his complaint in the Gospel about wages was nothing, in comparison to that which these can make, *Matth. 20. 12.* These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have born the burthen and heat of the day: but these men can say we have born the burthen and heat of the day, and have not received a penny for it, but they received it who did nothing, if not worse than nothing.

'Tis a smart and a true one of him that said, *It seems a hard piece of justice, that the price of publick freedom (when restored) should be the ruine only of such as did assert it.* 'Tis the fashion of this Town to give you once a week their bill of mortalitie, and to instance the several diseases by which they dyed; but I find not this disease mentioned, so many died with the sense of a dis-regarded loyalty: with a little pains I could present you with a black Bill of at least a hundred Gentlemen that dyed in and about this Town by no other disease but this, and want; and yet (as *Job*) though they saw no deliverance, they still held fast their integrity, and carryed it with them to be regarded and rewarded in another World: I could shew you whole Cart-loads of old shooes and mouldy bread, all the household-stuff that is left to these

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poor Gibeonites; I could tell you (from a very good hand) of a stout *Royalist*, that (like *Lazarus*) came into our *Hall* and carefully gather'd up the parings of bread, which not only the men, but the mice and dogs had left; (for our City dogs are so finely fed, that they scorn to eat that, which he was glad to find.)

And 'tis this endangers a famine, and provokes it; there is a signature in the very judgement, like *Adonibezek*, Judges 1. 7. *As I have done, so God hath requited me*; so God goes about this way to make you and them all of a piece, by tasting the same sauce with them, and by letting you to feel what 'tis to be in want; methinks, 'tis the very language of Heaven, *If you will not help them, the earth shall not help you*: God will reduce your fair fields and fatned selves to the same leanness with them, and then t'will be in fashion to want when great men wear it.

Let me give you my just fear, that as the present unkindness (if not injustice) to this sort of men is very great, so I do believe you will never thrive, neither in Creatures nor in Councils, nor in any undertakings till this be amended: For 'tis a crying sin, if *St. James* be to be believed, who tells us, *James 5. 4. That the hire of the labourers, which is kept back by fraud, cryeth, and with that loudness, that it enters into the eares of the Lord of Sabbath*; and what does this cry obtain? *Miseries*, verse 1: and what *Miseries*? *Your Riches are corrupted, and your Garments moth-eaten, your Gold and Silver is canker'd, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire*: And as nothing thrived in *Israel* as long as *Achan* fate abroad on his stolen wedge and garment, so though we gild over our Plunders and Sequestrations with the speci-

ous title of the just acquists of war, yet let not *England* hope to prosper till there be *ἀποκαταστάσις πάντων*, Acts 3. 21. *a restitution of all things.*

It is this just and most advantagious work which I commend with the greatest seriousness to your care and Councell; that as you have been indifferently severe in the *vindictive* part of justice, so you would shew your selves men in the *restorative* part of it, and fill up your office in both parts of it by *punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that have done well*, 1 Pet. 2. 14.

If you would stand free from the judgement you fear, do this and it will prove an Antidote: Ile commend to you but this one instance for your warrant and encouragement, 2 Sam. 21. in the 1. verse we read of a *famine* that was in the dayes of David, and David enquired of the Lord, and his answer was, *It is for Saul and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites*: No part of the History tells me that he slew them, which makes me think he only used them hardly, encreas'd their *servitude*, and made their lives a burthen to them, and indeed this is a piece of *murder*; and for this there was a *famine*.

Have we no such *Gibeonites* among us? that are as yet thought good for nothing else, but to cleave wood and carry water, to do the drudgery and mean offices of the Nation? we have, what need we be at the cost to Trade so far as the *Indies* for Blacks and Slaves, when we have enough at home? neither let us any more upbraid the *Mahometan* cruelty for making vassals of strangers, and binding such only to the oar whom they knew not under any other notion, then of a *just price of war*; we make Slaves among our selves, and that

that of those who have been at the greatest charge for our *liberty*. Have we not a people endeavoured to be suppressed and destroyed by our *late Saul*? Did any thing but bonds, and chains, and blocks, and halters, *abide them* here at home? and was any place *but a Jamaica*, a *Poneropolis* provided for them abroad? And as yet, these (the just heirs and owners of relief) are not relieved: 'Tis not a further vengeance on their enemies that they desire, nor the hanging up of *the Sons of Saul*; what will the blood of others do them good? if they loved that, they would never have been so prodigall of their own, what then? let our *David* send for them as *David* did for these, and debate the matter with them, as he did, verse 3. *What shall I do for you, and wherewith shall I make the attonement, that you may bless the inheritance of the Lord?*

This inheritance of the Lord (the Land of our Nativity) is like (it seems for this year at least) to go without a *blessing*; let the same words be heard from the lips of our *David*, and let the same question be put in your Councils, *what shall we do for you?* 'Tis quickly answer'd in the Text, which sets me down where I first set up: *Loose the bands of wickedness, undoe the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, break every yoke, deal your bread to the hungry, bring the poor that are cast out to your houses, cover the naked, and hide not your selves from your own flesh*; and though it may seem a work of cost, yet it is not without reward, ver. 8. &c. *Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your health shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you, and the glorie of the Lord shall gather you up, Then shall you call, and the Lord shall answer, you shall crie, and he shall say, here I am: Then shall the Lord guide you continually, and satisfie your*

your soul in drought, and make fat your bones, and you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And you shall build the old waste places, you shall raise foundations for many generations, and you shall be called the repairers of the breach, and the restorers of paths to dwell in.

Which Duties that ye may do, and which Mercies that you may obtain, the Father of mercies grant, through the Merits and Mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

F I N I S.